

June 14, 2004



The Honorable Edward Markey
U.S. House of Representatives
2108 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Markey:

The Alzheimer's Association enthusiastically supports the "*Ronald Reagan Alzheimer's Breakthrough Act of 2004*" that you introduced in the House on June 16th. This bipartisan legislation will ensure breakthroughs in Alzheimer's research, while providing more help to caregivers and increasing public education about prevention.

Working collaboratively, the federal government, the scientific community, the Alzheimer's Association and the pharmaceutical industry have made tremendous progress in the prevention, diagnosis and treatment of Alzheimer's disease. Improved diagnostic tools are helping providers to diagnose with more than 90 percent accuracy. Identification of potential therapeutic interventions has accelerated the search for new treatments. And additional strategies for slowing the progression of the disease process – to postpone onset of and hopefully prevent full-blown Alzheimer's – are under investigation. Your legislation recognizes that maintaining the current pace and momentum of Alzheimer research is the key to achieving the goal of a world without Alzheimer's disease. In addition, your bill realizes the importance of informing the public about prevention techniques that can maintain their brain as they age, based on the current research being undertaken by NIH.

The "*Ronald Reagan Alzheimer's Breakthrough Act of 2004*" also acknowledges the importance of supporting family members and friends who care for loved ones with Alzheimer's disease. Caregiving takes a high physical, emotional and financial toll on families. Caregiver interventions like respite care, counseling and supportive services can have a major impact on health care costs, economic well-being and quality of life. By increasing funding for the National Family Caregiver Support Program and the Alzheimer's Disease Demonstration Grant Program and authorizing a family caregiver tax credit, your bill will ensure that caregivers receive necessary supportive services.

The Alzheimer's Association sincerely appreciates your leadership in raising awareness about the need to increase funding for Alzheimer research and caregiver support services. We thank you for introducing the "*Ronald Reagan Alzheimer's Breakthrough Act of 2004*" and look forward to working with you to enact this important legislation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Stephen McConnell".

Stephen McConnell
Senior Vice President, Advocacy & Public Policy